Fertilizer Pricing Policy

*96. DR. M. JAGANNATH :
SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ :

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any committee was appointed by the Government to make recommendations and suggest fertilizer pricing policy to the Government;

(b) whether the report has since been submitted to the Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) A High Powered Fertilizer Pricing Policy Review Committee has been constituted to review the existing system of subsidization of urea and suggest an alternative, broad based, scientific and transparent methodology.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do nct arise.

Under-Trials In Jails

*97. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission in its endeavour to improve Jail conditions has expressed concern about the large percentage of under-trials languishing in jails without being formally brought to trial and pressed for their trial expeditiously; and

(b) if so, the action being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) In its endeavour to improve the prison conditions, the National Human Rights Commission has been emphasising the need for an expeditious disposal of cases of undertrials, languishing in jails. The Commission in their Annual Report for the year 1995-96 has remarked that the issue of overcrowding in the prison is of a serious concern and the conditions in jails are made worse by the large percentage of undertrials in jails.

With a view to reducing the number of undertrial prisoners, the Commission requested Inspector Generals of Prison all over the country to facilitate the implementation of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in 'Common Cause' Vs. Union of India and Others, which inter-alia directed the Registrars of High Courts to ensure that certain categories of undertrial prisoners whose cases have been pending in the Courts or whose trial has not commenced for specified periods, may be released on bail or personal bond or discharged or acquitted. However, no specific directions have been issued to the Government by the Commission, in this regard.

(b) Although 'Prison' is a State subject under the Constitution of India, the Central Government have always expressed their concern about the large number of undertrials languishing in jails without being formally brought to trial. The Central Government while interacting with the State Governments has stressed upon them to reduce the number of undertrials and has been suggesting various steps, like strengthening the infrastructure relating to the Administration of Criminal Justice and Prison Management, the liberalisation of bail procedure, speedy trial of cases, etc.

Loss of Life and Property Due to Earthquake in M.P.

*98. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA :
SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a devastating earthquake has shaken Jabalpur area in May, 1997;

(b) if so, the extent of loss of life and property suffered as a result thereof;

(c) whether the Government of Madhya Pradesh has requested the Central Government to give assistance for providing help and rehabilitation to the victims of this earthquake;

(d) if so, the total amount of Central aid given to the State Government;

(e) whether Narmada Valley and big dams are also considered unsafe in view of this earthquake; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government to avoid such tragedy in the country?